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HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITY

As the Government of Colombia (GOC) advances in its negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to end the regions' longest lasting armed conflict, the human rights situation in the country remains serious, and there are concerns that some human rights violations may increase after an agreement is signed. The government's ability to provide security for political activists (including former combatants), human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists and others, while ensuring access to justice for victims, will be challenged. Many of the advances and inroads made with support from previous programs are still fragile and will need ongoing assistance to ensure their eventual sustainability. To help address this complex situation, USAID's Human Rights Activity (HRA) will work closely with GOC and civil society organizations in 9 conflict-affected regions. HRA will track the shifting nature of the conflict, accommodating those shifts through programmatic flexibility and focusing resources to maximize impact on vulnerable populations.

PROGRAM APPROACH

HRA promotes a culture of human rights and helps the GOC and civil society prevent violations and respond effectively to violations that occur. By strengthening the capacities of the GOC, civil society and citizens to better protect and promote human rights, the probability for successful and inclusive peace is improved. HRA focuses on addressing potential post-accord concerns, while continuing to help government institutions and civil society address the needs of those groups disproportionately affected by human rights violations, or which have become increasingly vulnerable in the shifting context of the conflict. Emphasis is placed on gender-based violence.

HRA has three overarching components: (1) promotion of a culture of human rights, (2) prevention of human rights violations, and (3) adequate and effective response to human rights violations. HRA places special emphasis on regional human rights efforts, while maintaining some national focus, particularly with respect to policy reforms and the implementation of post-accord measures. Activities include a wide range of public awareness campaigns and training activities tailored for each audience, including public officials, the media, activists and students.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved effectiveness of local and national state institutions to implement human rights policies.
- Enhanced human rights education curricula in primary and secondary schools in targeted regions.
- Increased capacity of civil society organizations to advocate for human rights and accountability.
- Self-protection measures in place for at-risk populations, with a focus on gender-based violence.